

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 DHA-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 /082 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2182

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS BRASILIA 4796

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINS BR

SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS PROTEST CENSORSHIP; INTELLECTUALS PROTEST
STUDENT ARRESTS

REF: BRASILIA 4516

1. SUMMARY. PROVOKED BY THE RECENT IMPOSITION OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP ON IMPORTED PUBLICATIONS, SOME 2,500 BRAZILIAN JOURNALISTS PUBLISHED A MANIFESTO ON JUNE 8 (INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DAY) CALLING FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL CENSORSHIP AND DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES. FEDERAL CENSORS PROHIBITED ANY MENTION OF THE MANIFESTO ON BRAZILIAN RADIO OR TELEVISION ALTHOUGH MOST NEWSPAPERS CARRIED ARTICLES ON THE PETITION AND O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO PUBLISHED THE FULL TEXT. IN MINAS GERAIS, OVER 1300 ARTISTS, WRITERS, PROFESSORS AND INTELLECTUALS PUBLISHED ANOTHER PETITION PROTESTING THE RECENT ARREST OF 850 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND CALLING FOR "A GREAT NATIONAL CLAMOR IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS." END SUMMARY.

2. THE JOURNALISTS MANIFESTO AGAINST CENSORSHIP WAS READ ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 7 DURING "PUBLIC ACTS" COMMEMORATING UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DAY IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF JOURNALISTS' UNIONS IN TEN MAJOR BRAZILIAN CITIES. COPIES WERE DELIVERED THE NEXT DAY TO THE PRESIDENTS AND PARTY LEADERS IN THE SENATE AND CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. THE MANIFESTO PROCLAIMED THE SIGNERS' OPPOSITION TO "THE PARTIAL CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS AND COMPLETE CENSORSHIP OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, AS WELL AS OTHER RESTRICTIONS AND

THREATS TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION," AND WENT ON TO STATE THAT, "THE FULL LIBERTY OF OPINION, OF CRITICISM AND OF INFORMATION IS A RIGHT THAT IS DENIED BOTH US AND THE ENTIRE NATION BY THE VIOLENCE OF A CENSORSHIP THAT RESTRICTS AND MUTILATES NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, THAT HAS ALREADY DESTROYED VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS, AND IS INSTITUTIONALIZED TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT IT EVEN CONTROLS (ACCESS TO) INFORMATION IN COMMUNICATION SCHOOLS ..." THE MANIFESTO MAINTAINED THAT RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS FREEDOM AND EXCEPTIONAL ACTS SUCH AS AI-5 HAVE THE EFFECT OF "KEEPING THE BRAZILIAN POPULATE IN IGNORANCE OF NATIONAL PROBLEMS AND, THEREFORE, PREVENTING IT FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS." THE DECLARATION CLOSED BY STATING THAT IT IS A PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION OF ALL BRAZILIAN JOURNALISTS TO "STRUGGLE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CENSORSHIP AS PART OF THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES."

3. THE MANIFESTO RECEIVED THE SUPPORT OF A NUMBER OF PROMINENT BRAZILIAN POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING PRUDENTE DE MORAES NETO, PRESIDENT OF THE BRAZILIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, DALMO DE ABREU DALLARE, PRESIDENT OF THE SAO PAULO ARCHDIOCESAN COMMISSION ON JUSTICE AND PEACE, AND FEDERAL DEPUTY FREITAS NOBRE, MDB VICE LEADER IN THE CHAMBER AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE JOURNALISTS UNION OF SAO PAULO. SPEAKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER EURICO REZENDE CALLED THE DOCUMENT "DISTORTED" AND SAID THAT IT REFLECTED "PREJUDICE AND ILL WILL."

4. FEDERAL CENSOR PROHIBITED ANY MENTION OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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JOURNALISTS MANIFESTO ON BRAZILIAN RADIO OR TELEVISION BUT IT RECEIVED BROAD COVERAGE IN MOST NEWSPAPERS. IN RIO, HOWEVER, NEITHER O GLOBO NOR THE LIBERAL JORNAL DO BRASIL CARRIED ANY COVERAGE OF THE MANIFESTO UNTIL THREE DAYS AFTER ITS ORIGINAL PUBLICATION. THE EDITOR OF O GLOBO, STRONGLY PRO-GOVERNMENT, SAID THAT THE PAPER HAD NO INTEREST IN THE MANIFESTO, WHILE JORNAL INDICATED THAT IT HAD DEDICATED ITS PRESS COVERAGE ON JUNE 8 AND 9 TO THE OPEN LETTER OF JUAN S. VALMAGGIA, PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS SOCIETY, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DAY. NON-PUBLICATION OF THE JOURNALISTS MANIFESTO REPRESENTED A "CURIOUS MANNER OF COMMEMORATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS," COMMENTED PRUDENTE DE MORAES NETO.

5. IN AN EDITORIAL ON JUNE 8, O ESTADO NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THAT "CONDITIONS TODAY ARE MUCH BETTER WITH RESPECT TO CENSORSHIP THAN THEY WERE THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO" AND ADDED THAT "HAPPILY, WE HAVE TODAY RELATIVE FREEDOM OF

THE PRESS." SAO PAULO JOURNALIST HELIO BICUDO POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT WRITTEN JOURNALISM REACHES ONLY ABOUT 1 (ONE) PERCENT OF BRAZIL'S 110 MILLION PEOPLE, ALMOST ALL OF WHOM RELY ON HEAVILY CENSORED RADIO AND TELEVISION FOR INFORMATION. HE CONTINUED, "THUS, THAT PART OF THE PRESS THAT REMAINS FREE, THAT PUBLISHES AND COMMENTS ON CURRENT EVENTS, SERVES THE INTEREST OF THE POWER ELITE BECAUSE, IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION, THEY BELIEVE THAT NO ONE CAN CALL A GOVERNMENT THAT PERMITS ITS ACTS TO BE CRITICIZED A DICTATORSHIP."

6. THE MINAS GERAIS PETITION PROTESTED THE ARREST OF 850 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 4-5 WHO WERE ATTEMPTING TO HOLD A NATIONAL STUDENTS MEETING ON THE CAMPUS OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF MINAS GERAIS (BRASILIA 4592). THE MANIFESTO ATTACKED THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND USE OF ARBITRARY FORCE AGAINST
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LEGAL ASSEMBLIES AND SUPPORTED THE OPPOSITION OF JOURNALISTS, ARTISTS AND WRITERS TO CENSORSHIP. IT CONCLUDED BY CALLING FOR BRAZILIAN CITIZENS TO "UNITE AND RAISE A GREAT NATIONAL CLAMOR IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS."
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Drafter: n/a
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